

# **JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE** on **FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

February 8

9am ET /2pm GMT

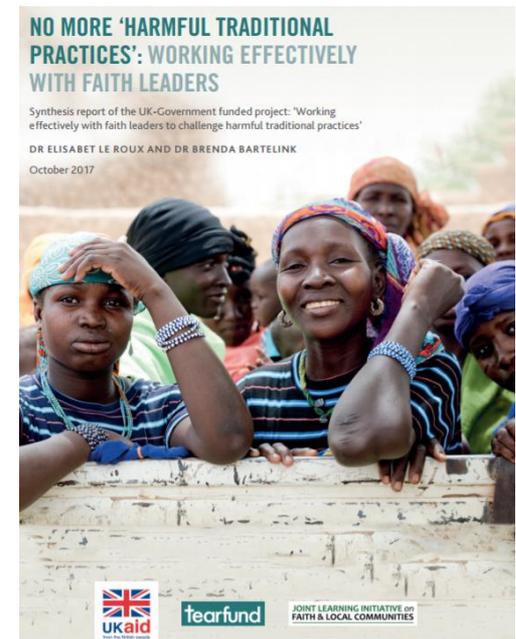
## **JLI GBV HUB WEBINAR**

Engaging faith leaders to effectively address  
harmful traditional practices

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Study Researchers: Elisabet Le Roux PhD and Brenda Bartelink PhD  
Discussion led by GBV Hub Co-Chair Liz Dartnall and Hub Coordinator  
Natalia Lester-Bush

[Gender-based-violence.jliflc.com](http://Gender-based-violence.jliflc.com)



# Webinar Outline

- Overview of the Webinar
- Intro to JLI GBV Learning Hub and HTP study toolkit
- Introduction to Speakers
- Presentations from study researchers
- Q&A
- Hub next steps

# JLI Gender-based Violence Learning Hub



## Hub Co-chairs:



**Diana Arango**  
World Bank



**Elizabeth Dartnall**  
Sexual Violence  
Research Institute

## Hub Secretariat:



**Veena O'Sullivan**  
Secretary

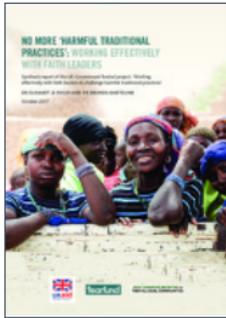


**Natalia Lester-Bush**  
Co-ordinator

# GBV Hub Toolkit

[gender-based-violence.jliflc.com/http-study/](http://gender-based-violence.jliflc.com/http-study/)

## Study Report



### No More 'Harmful Traditional Practices': Working Effectively With Faith Leaders

Synthesis report of the UK-Government funded project: 'Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices'



### Sleeping Giants: Mobilising Faith Leaders as Agents of Change

November 2017

In 2017, the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) undertook a study funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), entitled 'Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices. The following policy brief focuses on reported successful approaches in engaging faith leaders to address sensitive issues in their communities.



### Harmful Traditional Practices in The Context of Faith: A Literature Review

This document contains the literature review conducted at the start of the study. As such it served as an entry point in understanding faith engagement around HTPs. It also had an important role in guiding the empirical case study research.

**PUBLISHED:** 2017 | **AUTHOR:**Dr. Brenda E. Bartelink & Dr. Elisabet le Roux with Mr. W. Levinga



### Bibliography for Harmful Traditional Practices and Religion- 2017

#### Bibliography Themes:

- Prevalence of Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs)
- HTPs in the context of faith



### Case study with ABAAD as part of the UK Government-funded 'Working effectively with faith leaders to challenge harmful traditional practices'

This study on engaging with faith leaders on harmful traditional practices follows a multi-case case study design, with each individual case study focusing on one of five organisations, four of whom are international faith-based organisations (FBOs), and their work on HTPs and with faith leaders. This document details the findings from the case study done with ABAAD through five interviews.

**PUBLISHED:** 2017 | **AUTHOR:**Brenda E Bartelink, Elisabet le Roux & Selina Palm

**PUBLISHED:** 2017 | **AUTHOR:**Dr Brenda Bartelink, Dr Elisabet le Roux & Mr. Wouter Levinga

# No more 'harmful traditional practices': working effectively with faith leaders

## Study Researchers:



**Dr Elisabet le Roux**  
Unit for Religion and  
Development Research  
Stellenbosch University



**Dr Brenda  
Bartelink**  
University of  
Groningen

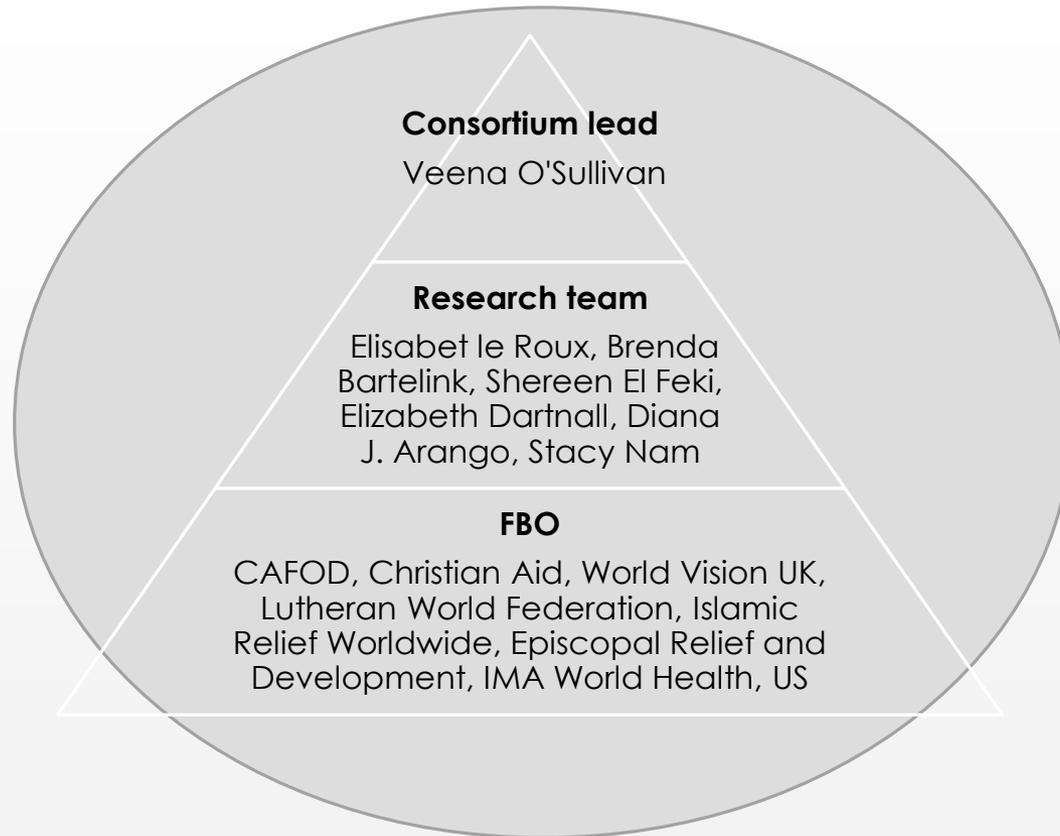


**JOINT LEARNING INITIATIVE** *on*  
**FAITH & LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

# **No more ‘harmful traditional practices’: working effectively with faith leaders**

Dr Elisabet le Roux & Dr Brenda E Bartelink  
8 February 2018

# Background



# Methodology

- Literature review
- Five case studies
- Online survey



# Harmful traditional practices in the context of faith: *A literature review*

- Mapping of literature available on HTPs in the context of faith
- Guide the empirical study
- Limited - Not a scoping study

# Contested concept

- ***Traditional cultural practices** reflect values and beliefs held by members of a community for periods often spanning generations. Every social grouping in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women. (OCHR 1995)*
- ***Persistent practices** and behaviours that are grounded on discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, age and other grounds as well as multiple and/or intersecting forms of discrimination that often involve violence and cause physical and/or psychological harm or suffering. (CEDAW 2014)*
- **HTP – HCP - HP**

# Methods

UN prevalence data

Search engines, snowballing

- (1) FGM/C
- (2) Child and Early Marriage (CEM)
- (3) Son Preference
- (4) Honour-Related Violence (HRV)

Religion, religious, religious leaders, faith, faith leaders, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism

Annotated Bibliography

# FGM/C in the context of faith

- FGM/C assumed to be faith related, but hard to determine
- Faith arguments used to legitimize FGM/C
- Faith leaders are key - influential in (correcting) this
  - Muslim leaders
  - Christian leaders
- Interventions

# CEM in the context of faith

- No clear relation between CEM and faith
- Faith arguments supporting CEM emerged as response to colonialism/ Christian missions
- Muslim contexts: relationship between faith and culture
- Interventions focussed on community leaders

# Son preference

- Discussed mainly in relation to culture
- Few (ethical) studies on Judaism, Christianity and Islam

# Honour Related Violence

- Honour Related Violence discussed as part of patriarchy and gender inequality
- Literature focussed on Islam
- Interpretations that condemn and legitimize HRV
- Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (CEWLA) engages faith leaders

“Culture and religion have to be placed alongside gender, age, race and class as the key factors in this analytical web which in turn shapes a person’s positioning, identity and experiences in relation to HCPs”

Longman & Bradley 2015

# Key findings

# Terminology

- Creates resistance in communities
- Enforces simplistic vilification of culture and religion
- Enforces colonialist discourse
- Hides gendered nature of practices and violence
- Certain biases around religion

# The role of faith, faith communities and faith leaders in HTPs

- Religion as *a* contributing factor to HTPs, but not *the* causal one.
- Simplistic understanding of religion & culture (?)
- faith leaders consider silence as the safer or easier option
- to engage with faith communities, one has to work through faith leaders

# Effective approaches when working with faith leaders

- Public health approach - many faith leaders lack the basic sexual and reproductive health knowledge relevant to certain HTPs
- scriptural/ theological approach
- Addressing HTPs holistically
- Engaging with faith leaders in a constructive and positive way
- Engage with all levels of the faith hierarchy

# In practice - how to intervene

- Small discussion groups
  - Formal or informal
  - skilled facilitation
  - Be safe spaces,
    - sensitive to power dynamics between participants,
  - Volunteer to take part
  - sensitive language; patience
  - a primary goal of building trust.

# Partnering faith

- Engagement with faith leaders as part of broader, community-based approaches

# Thank you

Elisabet le Roux (Stellenbosch University)

&

Brenda E. Bartelink (University of Groningen)

Comments &  
Questions?

# Join the JLI GBV Hub

[jliflc.com/user-registration](http://jliflc.com/user-registration)



## Stay in touch!

JLI GBV Hub Coordinator,  
Natalia Lester-Bush

[natalia.lester-bush@tearfund.org](mailto:natalia.lester-bush@tearfund.org)

JLI Knowledge Manager

[stacynam@jliflc.com](mailto:stacynam@jliflc.com)

### **HTP Study Researchers:**

Lisa le Roux

[eleroux@sun.ac.za](mailto:eleroux@sun.ac.za)

Brenda Bartelink

[b.e.bartelink@rug.nl](mailto:b.e.bartelink@rug.nl)

Thank you!